Electrocution of Gir lions

239. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that five Gir lions got electtouted during last six months till date;

(b) if so, whether this is accident or a well-planned atrocity by some vested-interest groups;

(c) the total number of lions which have died during 2006 and till date; and

(d) whether it is due to laxity of vigil on the part of forest guards of their connivance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As reported by the State Government, five Asiatic Lions have got electrocuted in the farmland at village Prempara, outside the Gir Protected Areas in October 2007, when, *prima facie,* the farmer had laid electrified wire fencing around his agriculture land to prevent crop damage from wild herbivores.

(c) From January, 2006 to January, 2008, 81 Lions have died (52 due to natural deaths, 1 due to accident, 6 due to electrocution, 9 due to poaching and 13 due to falling in well) in Gir protected area and surrounding habitants in Gujarat.

(d) No, Sir.

Under Ground Tunnel Project at AP

240. SHRI N ANDIYELLAI AH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the proposal of Andhra Pradesh Government (APG) to implement Under Ground Tunnel Project (UGTP) under the provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 which is to be set up under the sanctuary areas to meet the drinking water need of fluoride affected areas of Nalgonda district;

(b) the reasons for delay in sanctioning UGTP through preparatory work for the tunnel boring has already been completed with the approval of his Ministry and APG has deposited Rs. 55 crores in CAMPA account for rehabilitation of eight sanctuary based villages and for development of Srisailam sanctuary and 75 per cent of project work has already been completed; and

(c) by when this project is likely to be sanctioned and executed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The approval of the Central Government was accorded for "Survey and execution of Srisailam Left Bank canal under ground tunnel scheme through the forest area in Mahaboobnagar and Nalgonda districts on 21.04.1994.

(b) and (c) Before the State Government could commence the tunnel work in Sanctuary areas, the Hon'ble Supreme Court *vide* its order dated 14.2.2000 and 13.11.2000 directed that no permission should be accorded for carrying out any work in sanctuary area without obtaining its prior permission. The State Government has filed an IA No. 2059 in WP (C) 202/ 1995 before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India seeking permission to execute the tunnel work in sanctuary area. The permission of the Hon'ble Supreme Court is awaited.